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formed me that the day after I left, a delegation from the pueblo, with their priest, had waited upon him for the purpose of ransoming their lost god. It seemed that it had been missed almost as soon as taken, and that the thief, as soon as his spree was over, had become anxious on account of his conduct, and confessed his guilt, and directed them where to find their missing deity. When they were told it had been carried away by a stranger into a strange land, they expressed extreme regret, and appeared to be greatly affected over their loss.

The image is worked out of dark-green quartz syenite. The Pueblos, from whom it was obtained, did not make it, nor had they any knowledge or notion as to its origin, so far as I could learn. They only knew that it had passed down from one to another for many generations, and that for a long time it had had a place in their local traditions as a thing to be revered. I do not wish to be understood as placing any especial importance upon the place that this object occupied in the Pueblo village. I do not know that they have a well-defined system of idol worship. Their original traditions and forms of worship have become so peculiarly mixed and amalgamated with a degenerate and renegade Catholicism, that it is difficult to determine how much is one and how much the other. This much, however, is certain: they are filled with superstition, and prone to worship, more in fear than from any other incentive, any object or natural phenomenon that appears to them strange or unnatural. The object to which this brief paper refers is the work of another and an earlier people, from whose mysterious, disputed, "half concealed and half revealed" existence this little image derives its interest. I presume it was found by some of these Indians, perhaps many centuries ago. Its appearance was such as to awaken their curiosity, and not being able to account for its occurrence, and not knowing what should be done with such a looking thing, the natural propensity—to yet wholly extinct in the human species—to be on the safe side, prompted them to assign to it a niche in their fantastic hierarchy.

OBSERVATIONS OF THE BREEDING HABITS OF THE AMERICAN EARED GREBES.

(*Dytes nigricollis californicus*.)

BY N. S. GOSS.

June 4th, 1877, I had the pleasure of finding about one hundred pairs of the birds nesting in a little cove of Como Lake, a small alkali lake without outlet, in the Territory of Wyoming, on the line of the Union Pacific Railway—altitude 6,680 feet—nests in a narrow strip of rushes growing in water eighteen inches deep, and about one hundred and thirty feet from the shore; between the rushes and the shore a heavy growth of coarse, wide marsh grass, the whole not covering over from one to one and one-half acres. The bank being a little higher than the ground back, the approach was unobserved, and my appearance so unexpected and near gave the birds no time to cover their eggs as is their wont, giving me a fine opportunity, on wading out, to see the eggs in their nests. I collected the eggs from two nests, five in each, and counted from where I stood over twenty nests with from one to five eggs, quite a number completed, but without eggs, and others building; nests floating, made of old or broken rushes, weeds, and debris from the bottom and partially filled in and around the standing, growing rushes—no feathers or lining of any kind; from five to ten inches in diameter; the outer edge

or rim from two to three inches above the water; eggs in several touched the water, and were more or less stained in their wet beds; color of eggs when fresh, white, with a light bluish shade; average measurement of the ten eggs, $1\frac{8}{100}$ by $1\frac{2}{100}$ inches. I watched the birds closely, during the three days I remained. Those out upon the lake were noisy and active, keeping near the center and closely together. It was their courtship and mating-ground, but the birds in going to and from their nesting-places were silent and watchful. In leaving their nests, would dive off, come up quite a distance away, and then swim rapidly for the flock in the lake. I noticed at all times, not far from the breeding-grounds, from five to eight birds, evidently sentinels, sitting upon the water with heads high, ever upon the lookout and ready to give the alarm, but slow to leave their station—in fact never leaving the little bay, taking good care, however, to keep out of reach. As soon as I passed by, the birds frightened from their nests would cautiously but quickly return, join the sentinels, from which point they would dive and come up among the rushes. In no instance did I see them swim to or from their nests; they may, however, do so when not disturbed.

As papers of this character are written solely to present the observations and views of the different writers, in order that in the end its history may be known and correctly given, I will say that Mr. H. W. Henshaw, in paper of like character (*Am. Nat.*, VIII, 1874, 243), found the birds nesting in similar lakes and places in southern Colorado, but I think him somewhat in error in the conclusions reached, from the following portion of his observations, viz.:

"The eggs were wholly concealed from view by a pile of weeds and other vegetable material laid across. That they were thus carefully covered, merely for concealment, I cannot think, since in the isolated position in which these nests are usually found, the bird has no enemy against which such precautions would avail. On first approaching the locality, the grebes were all congregated at the further end of the pond, and shortly betook themselves through an opening to the neighboring slough; nor, so far as I could ascertain, did they again approach the nests during my stay of three days. Is it not then possible that they are more or less dependent for the hatching of their eggs upon the artificial heat induced by the decaying vegetable substances of which the nests are wholly composed?"

Surely the birds *have* enemies in the vicinity, especially in the hawks and gulls, that would quickly notice the eggs if uncovered. In the grass, not fifty feet from the nests I have described, a marsh hawk (*Circus hudsonius*) was found sitting upon five eggs. I also noticed several hawks in the vicinity, and several ring-billed gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) were skimming over and about the lake. Further, I do not think it "possible" to create artificial heat from the slow decay of the vegetable matter composing the nests, resting as they do in and upon ice-cold water, the eggs often touching the same. Before wading out to the nests, I removed my boots and socks, and during the short time I was in the water my feet and limbs were painfully cold. Colorado lies farther south, and the elevation not so great, but the waters are made largely from the melting snows, and must be chilly and cold so early in the season. I am inclined to think rather, that at the time the birds were first discovered, the males, and hen birds not mated, or laying, were near their nesting-grounds, and that those on their nests, after covering their eggs, dived off, came up in the flock, and swam away with them, returning one by one when the cause for alarm was removed. By swimming under water with only bill out at times to breathe (a habit of the birds well known), they could easily reach their nests unnoticed. Or it may be, as Mr. Henshaw only found three eggs in the nest—four to five being a full set—that none of the birds were sitting. In this case there would be no necessity for a hurried return, as absence during the day would do no harm.